

## EVENTS OF THE WEEK OVERSEAS

## British Politics.

EVERY now and then the rumor goes forth that the British coalition government is about to fall and that Mr. Lloyd George's days as prime minister are numbered. The loss in recent elections of two seats formerly held by former ministers and regarded as absolutely safe for the coalition has been the occasion for new prophecies of the defeat of the government. There are aspects of the situation which justify this belief and were the leader of the coalition not Lloyd George, one might feel reasonably safe in prophesying a new government. But the great Welshman appears to be able to defy all political precedents.

Among the issues on which opposition to the government is strongest are: The decontrol of the agricultural industry, Ireland, the near East, the protective tariff for essential industries, and government extravagance. The repeal of the act passed last December guaranteeing a minimum price for wheat and oats and minimum wage for agricultural laborers is proposed by the government on the ground that the financial liability under this bill is more than the country can stand. Farmers favor the repeal, but farm laborers will oppose the decontrol as it will mean the reduction of their wages. There are a good many more votes among farm laborers than among the owners and tenants.

As for Ireland, opinions may differ as to the rightness or wrongness of the government's policy, but it must be acknowledged that its policy has not been successful. Because the Irish policy has failed so completely to bring about pacification, the liberal opposition which was at first negligible has been slowly but surely gaining ground. The powerful Northcliffe press as well as certain other papers has begun to attack Lloyd George's near East policy as expensive and dangerous to the security of the empire. The Asquith Liberals and Labor party are vigorously opposing the safeguarding of industries bill and throughout the country there is the growing belief that the government is wildly extravagant and that under a new cabinet the excessive taxes might be reduced.

Attempts have been made to reduce or prevent the increase of government expenditures by such measures as the reduction of the amount of unemployment pay and by increase in postal rates and improvement in the management of the postoffice department. Such measures do but little to counteract hostile criticism. Labor is, of course, solidly against any reduction of unemployment pay and the postoffice reforms are regarded by the anti-waste campaigners as "an odd form of economy to save a pound on the post and sink a million in Mesopotamia." The announcement in parliament that the expenditures of the British government in Palestine and Mesopotamia last year amounted to between £70,000,000 and £80,000,000 will doubtless be a subject for caustic comment in the opposition press.

## French Coal Situation.

ACCORDING to reports at the department of commerce the coal resources of France contained in deposits lying at a depth of not more than 3,937 feet are estimated at 13,143,000,000 tons and at a depth of 5,905 feet at 17,600,000,000 tons.

France's production of coal in 1913 was 40,844,000 tons and consumption 64,834,000 tons, the additional 23,990,000 tons being imported from England, Belgium and Germany. The future estimated French deficit in coal, due to the return of Alsace-Lorraine and the increased industrial activities, is estimated at over 40,000,000 tons.

The total production of coal in France during the past eight years, according to an article published in *L'Information Financiere*, is given as indicated below:

Tons.		Tons.	
1913.....	40,844,218	1917.....	28,891,723
1914.....	26,568,258	1918.....	25,000,000
1915.....	19,523,863	1919.....	22,476,766
1916.....	21,310,000	1920.....	25,274,304

The French mines have since the war suffered severely for lack of labor. The shortage was especially marked during the early part of the war and there is still need for more labor, in spite of the fact that the number of workers at the present time is greater than in 1913. This is due to the decrease in production per worker. Since the beginning of the war, the decrease in the daily production per unit of labor (underground and surface workers) has been very marked, as will be noted below:

Kilos.		Kilos.	
1913.....	668	1917.....	617
1914.....	670	1918.....	615
1915.....	644	1919.....	448
1916.....	648	1920.....	443

A kilo equals 2.205 pounds.

Whereas the decrease in production per worker during the war was due principally to the mobilization, the poor quality of labor available, and the poor condition of the mines and machinery, the decrease during the past two years is attributed to the legal reduction of working hours.

## AGITATOR IS FREED



THE release from jail last week of Sylvia Pankhurst, British women's rights leader, was made the occasion for rejoicing by her friends. She served five months in Holloway jail, London, as the result of writings that appeared in her Communist paper, the *Workers' Dreadnought*.

## Danish Imports and Exports.

Import and export trade of Denmark practically balanced in March, according to figures issued by the statistical department of the ministry of finance.

"While the figures in February show a small increase in the import surplus," comments the *Danish Foreign Office Journal*, "the figures now published for March show an improvement in the Danish foreign trade position, the imports only exceeding exports by about 8,000,000 kroner as against 53,000,000 kroner in February and 37,000,000 kroner in January. Allowing for such invisible benefits as freights, etc., the foreign trade of Denmark may be regarded as showing a not insignificant excess in favor of the country which thus has a profit balance for the first time for a long while."

"The imports in March were 138,000,000 kroner against 160,000,000 kroner in February and 167,000,000 kroner in January, while the exports were 129,500,000 kroner against 107,000,000 kroner in February and 130,000,000 kroner in January."

"The import reduction is mainly due to a decrease in the import of vegetable products from over 24,000,000 to about 11,000,000 kroner, artificial manures from 18,000,000 to under 13,000,000 kroner, petrol from 9,100,000 to 4,500,000 kroner, while iron, fodder, yarn, textiles and hides also show substantial decreases."

"On the export side butter increases from 28,500,000 in February to 40,000,000 kroner in March, and eggs from 9,000,000 to 15,000,000 kroner. Live cattle at 14,000,000 kroner and slaughterhouse products at 27,000,000 kroner also showed increases."

"A comparison between March, 1921, and March, 1920, also shows a significant change in the picture. In March, 1920 the imports totaled 295,000,000 kroner and the export 167,000,000 kroner, showing an import surplus of 128,000,000 kroner, as against the 8,000,000 kroner shown in the above figures for the same month this year. The first quarter of 1921 also showed a considerably lower surplus than the same period last year. In the first quarter of 1920 the import was 768,900,000 kroner, while the export was only 385,000,000 Kroner. The corresponding quarter of 1921 shows an import of 465,000,000 kroner and an export of 367,000,000 kroner, which means that the amount of the import surplus has been reduced from about 400,000,000 kroner in January-March, 1920 to about 100,000,000 kroner this year."

*La Nacion*, of Buenos Aires, is quoted by the New York Times to the effect that the attitude of the United States government in requiring that Mexico sign a treaty before its present government is recognized is not justified by international law and is in effect an invasion of the sovereign rights of Mexico.

The speech of the King at the opening of the recently elected Italian Chamber has been well received. The speech dealt particularly with reform of the bureaucracy, reduction of the naval and military forces, settlement of the Socialist-Fascist struggle and new educational proposals.

## Franco-German Negotiations.

THE conversations which have taken place during the past week at Wiesbaden between Louis Loucheur, French minister of the devastated regions, and Dr. Walter Rathenau, German minister of reconstruction, may result in an improvement in the relations between the two countries and in the adoption of a method of co-operation by which the problems of reconstruction may be worked out with less friction and better results than have yet been obtained. According to the report of M. Loucheur, no definite decision was made, but the way has been prepared for extensive negotiations for the use of German labor and materials in rebuilding the devastated regions of Northern France. Dr. Rathenau is said to have proposed wider co-operation by which both France and Germany would receive valuable benefits. No details for the carrying out of such a scheme have been determined and the extent to which it may be applied depends largely upon the political situation within the two countries concerned.

As was to be expected, the reactionary and nationalist papers of both countries protest against the folly of negotiation and remind their readers of the perfidy of the enemy. The more moderate and more liberal papers express the hope that good may result from these negotiations, and in Germany the section of the press which supports the Wirth government hails the Wiesbaden conference as an event of the greatest importance.

## Opposing Policies in Silesia.

NO great progress has been made during the past week either in the establishment of order in Upper Silesia or in reconciling the opposing views of the French and British on the question of how the pacification of the area is to be accomplished. The French government has sent a note to Berlin demanding that Gen. Hoefler and his irregular troops withdraw in compliance with the orders of the inter-allied commission. Gen. Hoefler declines to withdraw, and the German government argues that the responsibility rests on the interallied commission. The Germans also say that they have no control over Hoefler, who gets his orders from a mysterious committee of twelve which exercises great authority in the undisputedly German part of Upper Silesia.

The British have dispatched a note to Paris referring to the lack of co-operation on the part of the French and urging that immediate and concerted action be taken to restore order and get the Upper Silesians back at work. The British favor the evacuation by allied troops of the districts wholly Polish and wholly German and a concentration of forces in the disputed industrial area. By limiting the territory they are required to police, the allied forces would be sufficient to enforce order. The French prefer to defer decisive action and to employ more leisurely and more peaceful methods of persuasion.

## Notes on Foreign Affairs.

Czecho-Slovakia and Rumania have just completed an agreement by which the territorial disputes have been settled to the satisfaction of both parties and a precedent in friendly co-operation and mutual concession has been established. By the agreement the Czechs will hand over to Rumania eight villages with a population of 10,000, of whom 7,000 are Rumanians, and in return will receive three villages with a population of 3,000, of whom all but six are Czechs.

The Spanish representatives at the International Conference on Transit and Communications now being held at Barcelona under the auspices of the league of nations, have made the recommendation that in addition to French and English, Spanish should be recognized as an official language of this and other conferences. It was emphasized that next to English Spanish was the most widely used language in international commerce and was spoken by more than 100,000,000 persons. This matter will be decided at the next meeting of the assembly of the league at Geneva.

It has been reported that a British company has been awarded large concessions in the Baku oil fields by the Soviet government. According to the terms of the agreement the Soviet government is to receive one-quarter of the oil produced, the remaining three-quarters to go to the company, which is permitted to establish its own police organization. An attempt is said to have been made by Americans, formerly interested in the Baku fields, to secure concessions from the present Russian government.

The plebiscite in the Austrian province of Salzburg resulted in approximately 100,000 votes being cast for an union with Germany.